

REMARKS

In the Office Action dated December 12, 2005, the Examiner imposed an election of species requirement under 35 U.S.C. §121, stating that the application contains claims directed to patentably distinct species. namely the species of Figures 1 and 2 (Group I), the species of Figure 3 (Group II), and the species of Figure 4 (Group III).

Applicant respectfully traverses this election of species requirement on the basis that, if multiple patentably distinct species are in fact disclosed and claimed in the present application, there are only two patentably distinct species, namely the species of Figures 1 through 3, and the species of Figure 4.

The embodiment shown in Figures 1 and 2 employs an elastic connection element that has a spherical receptacle therein that receives a spherical free end of the actuator. The only difference between the embodiment of Figures 1 and 2 and the embodiment of Figure 3 is that instead of a spherical actuator and spherical receptacle, the embodiment of Figure 3 employs a tapering actuator and a tapering receptacle.

By contrast, in the embodiment of Figure 4, the elasticity of the connection element is augmented by the use of mechanical catches 23.

If the Examiner intends to maintain the position that the embodiment of Figures 1 and 2 is a patentably distinct species from the embodiment of Figure 3, then Applicant assumes the Examiner is prepared to state that if the Examiner finds prior art showing the tapering configuration of the embodiment of Figure 3, the Examiner would not consider that prior art as a basis for rejecting claims directed to the spherical configuration used in the embodiment of Figures 1 and 2. If the

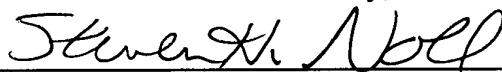
Examiner is not willing to adopt that conclusion, then the Examiner should not maintain the separation of the embodiment of Figures 1 and 2, and the embodiment of Figure 3, as patentably distinct species.

Applicant recognizes that even though the election of species requirement is traversed, Applicant is required to make an election. Therefore, in the event that the election of species requirement is maintained in the manner set forth in the Office Action, Applicant elects the species of Group I. The claims readable on that species are claims 1, 2, 4, 7, 8, 9 and 10, and new claims 11 and 12. Claims 1 and 8 are generic claims reading on all three species.

In the event that the Examiner agrees with the Applicant that a more proper grouping of species would be the species of Figures 1 through 3 and the species of Figure 4, Applicant then elects the species of Figures 1 through 3. The same claims designated above are readable on that species, with the addition of new claim 13.

Early consideration of the application is respectfully requested.

Submitted by,



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